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West Germany: Bonn's Perspective on Intra- German Relations

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An Intelligence Assessment

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*EUR 84-10214
November 1984*

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West Germany: Bonn's Perspective on Intra- German Relations

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted]
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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 30 October 1984
was used in this report.*

Setbacks are nothing new for Bonn's intra-German policy, and the postponement of East German leader Honecker's visit will not alter West German policy or prevent Bonn from trying to insulate intra-German ties from superpower tensions. Bonn's objectives remain unchanged: it will continue to pursue expanded ties. Although the overwhelming majority of West Germans endorse the idea of reunification, few expect it to occur in the near future. Talk of reunification remains theoretical and vague, and Bonn's intra-German policy is not following a timetable or "blueprint" aimed at achieving that goal. Policymakers in Bonn concentrate instead on easing the burdens imposed by a divided fatherland, and they probably hope at best to create an atmosphere conducive to further improvements.

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Under the Kohl government, intra-German relations have improved noticeably, particularly on humanitarian and economic issues. Political relations also have improved, as is evidenced by the large number of high-level contacts and the broad range of issues now under discussion. We expect additional agreements, principally on environmental topics. Although Bonn may make concessions on some of East Germany's basic demands, such as adjustment of the Elbe River border, the West Germans still give no indication of readiness to go beyond discussions on the most fundamental issues involving recognition of East German sovereignty.

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Bonn continues to insist that nothing it does in intra-German relations will lessen its commitment to the West or to NATO policies. Indeed, we believe that government policy—combined with the negative Soviet reaction to it—has helped deflect attention in West Germany away from the breach in the longstanding domestic consensus on security and foreign policy caused by intermediate-range nuclear force deployments. The government has attempted—thus far successfully, in our view—to prove to its public that membership in NATO is compatible with closer German-German ties.

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Bonn expects Western recognition of this point. At the same time, the West Germans are suspicious of Western, especially US, attitudes toward Bonn's intra-German policy, and they remain extremely sensitive to signs of opposition among their allies to closer ties with East Germans. Italian Foreign Minister Andreotti's public statement equating the Kohl government's intra-German policy with "pan-Germanism" evoked the most negative West German reaction against an ally in recent memory.

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The intra-German relationship does pose problems for the West. The popularity of closer intra-German ties gives the Kohl government a high stake in the relationship, and Bonn is under public pressure not to take actions that could incur setbacks. This pressure increases the risk that intra-German concerns will conflict with or even eclipse some policy goals of higher priority to the NATO Allies, especially if Bonn does not view a given NATO initiative as fundamentally important to the future of the Alliance. Already, there are signs that the West Germans are willing to broaden the scope of bilateral dealings with East Germany to include discussions of some security issues. While we believe Bonn would not knowingly contradict NATO policy during such discussions, the mere fact that the discussions are taking place could be viewed by the public as a sign of Allied disunity and lead to popular misperceptions of Allied objectives.

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NATO faces a dilemma in reacting to Bonn's intra-German policy. On the one hand, Western support for Bonn's objectives increases the benefits to NATO by strengthening the pro-Alliance government forces now conducting the policy. At the same time, however, exaggerated support for Bonn's intra-German policy could give the Kohl government a false sense of security regarding Allied concerns and cause it to overestimate its room for maneuver in dealing with the East. We believe that this, in turn, increases chances that some aspects of Bonn's policy could lead to a weakening of its support for NATO initiatives viewed as threatening to East-West or intra-German relations.

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West Germany: Bonn's Perspective on Intra- German Relations

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Introduction

Despite postponement of East German leader Erich Honecker's visit to West Germany, the quality of intra-German relations remains sharply improved from what would have been expected only a few years ago:

- The two Germanys have been able to improve relations despite increased tensions between the superpowers.
- West German conservatives are making concessions to the East Germans that the Social Democrats could not have contemplated.
- In contrast with the past, the two Germanys increasingly are tackling difficult issues on a strictly bilateral basis.¹

Public statements by both sides indicate that neither wishes the intra-German dialogue to be hindered by the postponement of Honecker's visit. Immediately after the announcement of the postponement, East Germany suggested new dates for the next round of negotiations on a cultural agreement. Most observers expect that a summit eventually will take place, probably next year. The spokesman for the East German Permanent Representation in Bonn went out of his way to emphasize that the word "postponement"—not "cancellation"—had been used to describe Honecker's decision. In the near term, however, the pace of the relationship is likely to be slower given both sides' awareness of Soviet sensitivities.

This paper examines Bonn's objectives in its dealings with East Berlin, the issues the two sides will be considering, prospects for agreements, and implications for the United States of West Germany's pursuit of closer intra-German relations.

¹ This bilateral cooperation was clearly evident last June in the way the two Germanys handled the sensitive problem stemming from East Germans seeking asylum in the West German Permanent Representation in East Berlin. Bonn and East Berlin also worked out an arrangement in July permitting their respective national carriers Lufthansa and Interflug to provide charter service for trade fairs. The West Germans did not inform the Allies in advance that this issue was even under discussion.

Objectives of West Germany's Intra-German Policy

The government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl does not question its loyalty to NATO and does not believe its Allies should. Nor does the government consider its conduct of intra-German relations to be in conflict with NATO policy. Indeed, Bonn can always point to Alliance policy—which endorsed Germany's peaceful reunification as a precondition for West Germany's entry into NATO—to justify its actions. And Bonn's behavior this past year suggests it does not consider its intra-German policy to be any other country's business. It has become as assertive and sensitive about its prerogatives in this area as the United Kingdom and France are over control of their nuclear forces.

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Despite the secrecy with which the Kohl government formulates and conducts intra-German relations, we can say with a high degree of certainty that West German actions do not stem from a single motivation (for example, a drive for immediate reunification or a desire for economic gain) and that the West Germans are not operating from a "blueprint" designed to achieve reunification according to specific steps or an established timetable. Rather, in forging links with the East, Bonn appears simply to be taking advantage of opportunities as they arise. Indeed, one major criticism of the government's intra-German policy by the opposition and the media, and even by some Christian Democrats, is that it lacks an overall concept.

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The absence in Bonn of a grand scheme for German reunification, or even long-range goals, may be intentional. German unity and the existence of NATO in its current form clearly are incompatible. Probably in an effort to avoid confronting this incompatibility, successive West German governments—the present administration included—have refused to develop a

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grand strategy and have opted instead for vague and general themes. The current favorite envisages German reunification within the broader context of a "European peace order." How all this is to occur is never explained. Instead, Bonn apparently prefers to concentrate on the pursuit of more piecemeal and mundane improvements in intra-German relations.

The Kohl government's policy toward East Germany is motivated by at least four factors: ²

- *Domestic political considerations.* The Kohl government is determined to demonstrate that it is willing and able to carry on a dialogue with the East at least as well as the Social Democratic Party (SPD) did. This effort became even more important after intermediate-range nuclear force (INF) deployments began, when opponents claimed the presence of the missiles would destroy the ties established with the East over the last decade. Because the Soviet Union is a reluctant interlocutor at the moment, relations with Eastern Europe take on increased importance in fulfilling the need to show readiness for dialogue. We believe the apparent willingness of some East Europeans to cooperate has, for the time being at least, allowed the Kohl government to achieve this important domestic objective. The recently postponed visits to West Germany by Honecker and Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov have detracted little from the public's perception of the Kohl government's readiness to pursue dialogue.
- *Promote intra-German reconciliation.* Keeping the door open to eventual reunification remains a constitutional obligation for all West German governments, although no influential West German expects reunification soon. Nevertheless, Kohl is worried about declining interest in reunification among the young and believes that East-West contacts and awareness of the national question must be promoted if the goal is ever to be achieved. For the time being, all East Germans are German citizens, according to the Basic Law (constitution), and the West Germans assign high priority to improving the living conditions of their countrymen to the East and to increasing human contacts to ease the burdens of partition.

- *International considerations.* In a statement published on 6 August, West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher asserted that the middle-sized and smaller countries can help ensure that superpower rivalry does not get out of control. This was yet another version of a point of view the West Germans have long argued: that promoting a network of political, cultural, and economic ties with the East can help ease East-West tensions. The architects of *Ostpolitik*—the Social Democrats under Willy Brandt—also believed such contacts would help bring about political change in the East. Even Kohl reportedly has come around to this view.

- *Economic benefits.* The bilateral economic relationship—distinctly secondary, in Bonn's eyes, to the political relationship—is markedly lopsided in East Germany's favor.³ Although trade between the two Germanys rose 8 percent in 1983, East Germany still accounts for only about 2 percent of total West German trade. Certain small and medium-sized firms benefit particularly, but only 70,000 jobs in the Federal Republic—out of a total work force of more than 27 million—depend on exports to East Germany. Nonetheless, all sources of employment take on added significance during a period of high unemployment, such as West Germany is experiencing.

The West Germans must walk a fine line in pursuing these objectives. Bonn respects Soviet primacy in Eastern Europe, and does not want to be viewed as attempting to drive wedges between Moscow and its East European allies or to undermine Communist rule in the East. The West Germans realize that such perceptions would increase Moscow's incentive to tighten control and place East European leaders on the defensive in dealing with the Soviet leadership. Accordingly, the Kohl government has been careful to

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avoid comment on, and—to the extent it can—to discourage public speculation about, reports of differences between Moscow and East Berlin regarding intra-German ties. [redacted]

even conservative Inner-German Relations Minister Heinrich Windelen commented that instability in East Germany would only force East Berlin to take inflexible positions, thereby endangering the gains Bonn had achieved so far. [redacted]

The Kohl government's room for maneuver also is constrained by Western sensitivities. We believe that the Kohl government's push for greater European cooperation is related to its simultaneous pursuit of improved intra-German relations. Kohl no doubt sees expanded European cooperation as a way both to cement West German ties with the West and to contain Western fears—particularly on the part of the French, and even by some conservatives in West Germany—of what might be occurring in intra-German relations. [redacted]

The Domestic Consensus

Despite signs of declining interest among younger West Germans in actual reunification, closer intra-German relations appear to be growing in importance and favor with the West German public, a circumstance that all political parties seek to exploit. A SINUS Institute poll conducted in 1983, for example, found that 86 percent of West Germans believed that increased tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union should not stand in the way of Bonn's seeking new agreements with East Berlin. This result was an increase of 14 percentage points over the results of similar polls conducted in 1981 and 1982. The survey also showed that between 70 and 85 percent of the respondents believed that regular meetings between West and East German officials, increased youth exchanges and sports competition, and joint church conferences could lead to improved relations. [redacted]

Although public support for closer intra-German relations is not new, there is a major difference in the conduct of intra-German relations today as opposed to those in years past: the Christian Democrats are now a part of the consensus. Contrary to expectations raised by their rhetoric during the 1970s, the Christian Democrats have not moved to restrict intra-German contacts or to demand that East Germany grant equal concessions. At the same time, the government, actively supported by many leading conservatives such as Christian Social Union Chairman

Franz Josef Strauss, now has a freedom to deal with the East that the Social Democratic governments of Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt never had. [redacted]

The pace of intra-German relations has increased considerably since the Christian Democrats came to power. Bonn and East Berlin have concluded a number of agreements in such areas as trade, credits, and travel arrangements. Bilateral contacts of all types and at all levels have increased markedly. And this progress has come despite a sharp deterioration in East-West relations and despite warnings last year from East Germany that INF deployments in the West would cause the onset of an "ice age" in relations between the two Germanys [redacted]

Most of the progress, in fact, appears to have occurred after those deployments began in November 1983:

- In that month, the two Germanys signed a treaty to improve East German postal and telephone services in return for an increase in West German payments.
- In December, after years of negotiations, West Berlin assumed control of parts of the city's old subway system—previously administered entirely in the East—that run through the Western sector.
- In the summer of 1984 Bonn guaranteed the second large loan to East Berlin within two years in return for an easing of travel restrictions, mostly for West Germans traveling eastward.
- Airlines in both nations also agreed to open charter flights between specific cities for special occasions such as trade fairs.
- At least 33,000 East Germans have emigrated to the West this year, in sharp contrast to the average 8,000 to 10,000 in recent years.
- Throughout the period since November 1983, numerous West Germans of high political rank, including cabinet ministers, have traveled to East Germany and have often met with Honecker. [redacted]

The Social Democrats have expressed general support for the objectives of Kohl's intra-German policy, which they see as an extension of their own. This support was evident during a Bundestag debate on intra-German policy last spring, for example, and in the SPD's endorsement of credit guarantees. The SPD's approval of Kohl's objectives has not, naturally

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Figure 1. Philipp Jenninger. [redacted]

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enough, caused it to resist trying to score political points against the government. In early August, SPD leaders joined the media and some influential Christian Democrats in criticizing the government for failing to gain the inclusion of West Berlin in the eased travel restrictions granted by East Germany in July in response to the credit guarantee. And SPD spokesmen placed much of the blame for postponement of the Honecker visit on the Christian Democrats and the Kohl government for allegedly mishandling the preparations and poisoning the atmosphere with irresponsible statements.⁴ [redacted]

The interparty recriminations obscure the extent to which the government and opposition agree on the objectives of intra-German policy. Although the Social Democrats indicate willingness to discuss matters

⁴ Domestic rhetoric became quite vituperative in September as the SPD sought to exploit the Honecker and Zhivkov postponements. During a Bundestag debate on 12 September, top SPD leaders argued that the Kohl government was incapable of conducting *Ostpolitik*. They played down the role of the Soviets in the postponements, while generally accepting the East German explanation that the political debate in West Germany created a poor atmosphere for the visit. And SPD Chairman Brandt even blamed the postponements on the poor state of East-West relations caused by the Kohl government's acceptance of INF deployments. [redacted]

The Social Democrats' rhetoric led to equally harsh charges from the Christian Democrats. Kohl responded by saying that the Social Democrats had made themselves "useful idiots" for the East. Kohl and other Christian Democrats also have claimed that the Social Democrats' behavior undermines the basis for a national consensus on "Deutschlandpolitik." [redacted]

related to East German sovereignty, they have put forth no realistic alternative proposals. And the government is more prepared to discuss security issues with East Berlin than the opposition's rhetoric would indicate. Much of the SPD rhetoric is tactical maneuvering, and we do not expect the Social Democrats to challenge the domestic consensus. For example, prior to the proposed Honecker visit, and again in late September, SPD arms control expert Egon Bahr sharply rejected Soviet allegations of revanchism and Nazism in Bonn's intra-German policy—a move welcomed by the Kohl government. Indeed, Bahr—who negotiated the 1970 Moscow treaty normalizing bilateral relations—warned the Soviets in July that characterizing West Germany's desire for reunification as revanchism would undermine that treaty. [redacted]

The Social Democrats realize that they cannot afford to lose all influence with respect to a policy they initiated and one that is supported by most West Germans. Party leaders told US diplomats earlier this year that they plan to remain in the forefront of efforts to strengthen intra-German relations. To this end, the SPD, in our view, will press for expanded political cooperation with East Berlin, with particular emphasis on the discussion of security issues. [redacted]

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Current Issues

Movement on the Gera Demands? Apparently irreconcilable differences between East German and West German goals define the limits of political cooperation between the two states. For example, Bonn's fulfillment of all four of Honecker's so-called Gera Demands would entail West German recognition of East German sovereignty, and a consequent "normalization" of relations as between two separate and equal neighboring states. When he made the demands in a speech at the town of Gera in 1980, Honecker claimed they must be met before any improvements in intra-German relations were possible. West German observers of all political hues have commented that sooner or later the Kohl government will have to deal with these demands if it hopes to keep intra-German relations moving forward. [redacted]

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On some issues, compromise will be politically difficult. For example, it would be nearly impossible for any government in Bonn to make concessions on East Berlin's demands for formal recognition of East German sovereignty. The West German Basic Law prohibits such concessions by requiring the federal government to work for German reunification and to prevent the emergence of separate sovereign German states. This requirement precludes formal agreement to two of the Gera Demands—recognition of East German citizenship and conversion to embassies of the permanent representations established in 1974. In an effort to overcome this fundamental obstacle, an increasing number of West German politicians—at first Social Democrats, but now even some Christian Democrats—have spoken of a possible “respect” for East German citizenship. [REDACTED]

West German officials invariably fail to define what “respect” might mean and how the concept would be implemented. In many ways, the West Germans already “respect” East German citizenship. For example, although all East Germans are entitled to receive West German passports upon entering the Federal Republic, Bonn's policy does not force them to accept passports. Consequently, the two sides could agree to characterize this aspect of Bonn's policy publicly as “respect” for East German citizenship. [REDACTED]

But Bonn still does not appear prepared to take any action that could be interpreted as formal recognition of East Germany as a separate state. Indeed, Kohl himself has stated publicly that issues dealing with basic questions of sovereignty are not open to negotiation, and former Chancellery State Secretary Philipp Jenninger has stated that on the issue of citizenship Bonn would not accept any solution that prevents East Germans from receiving West German citizenship on request. When Egon Bahr suggested in early September that any visit to East Germany by the Chancellor or Federal President Weizsacker should include a stop in East Berlin, the government responded that “this is not a topic for discussion,” as it would imply recognition of East Berlin as the capital of a separate East German state. [REDACTED]

There are areas, however, where greater political cooperation would not automatically constitute recognition of East German sovereignty, in West German eyes. The two remaining Gera Demands are examples: adjustment of the Elbe River boundary and closure of the Salzgitter Center (which documents human rights abuses by the East German regime). In each case, prominent West German politicians from all major parties have suggested room for compromise, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Jenninger, for example, has spoken recently of a *modus vivendi* regarding the Elbe, whereby both sides would agree to disagree *de jure* while operating with a *de facto* recognition of the border in the middle of the river (the West Germans now claim the border runs along the eastern shore).⁵ Any border change may also require Allied concurrence. [REDACTED]

While few West Germans dispute the validity of the Salzgitter Center's claims of human rights abuses in the East, an increasing number have pointed out that the Center's extensive documentation has led to few prosecutions and that it may not be worth keeping open if, as they believe, it remains an impediment to better relations. According to press reports, the Center employs only two people. Both Windelen and Volker Ruehe, deputy chairman of the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union Bundestag caucus, recently have suggested that Salzgitter could be closed if the situation along the inner-German border were to “improve.” On both the Elbe border and Salzgitter matters, however, the federal government must win the approval of state governments for any changes. This approval probably would take time and involve some resistance. [REDACTED]

⁵ One West German official recently confided to US diplomats that an interministerial review of the Elbe border question had concluded that Bonn could agree to changes in the border because it could not be determined where the Allies had drawn the demarcation line. The review was made by technical experts, he added, and it had yet to receive political endorsement. [REDACTED]

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There also is much talk about the establishment of official East-West parliamentary relations, principally exchanges and regularly scheduled meetings of working groups. Concern over the status of Berlin deputies in the delegations and objections that such relations might grant the East German Volkskammer equal recognition as a democratically elected parliament have thus far prevented much progress. US officials have noted, however, that resistance to the proposal has declined recently, the decline being particularly evident in a Bundestag debate after the visit to East Berlin in March of an SPD delegation led by Horst Ehmke. Most government spokesmen have approved the idea in principle, adding only the expected notes of caution on matters of status regarding Berlin. []

Nonpolitical Topics for Discussion. Despite increased discussion of political topics, intra-German exchanges remain largely economic and humanitarian, and this may be one reason why relations have been so smooth for the past year. Both Honecker and Kohl reportedly agreed during their meeting in Moscow last February that they must concentrate for the present on practical problems that do not threaten the status quo in Europe or the stability of their respective political systems—presumably problems that are open to solution and could help improve the atmosphere of bilateral relations. []

In line with this approach, Kohl apparently would like to focus on expanding environmental cooperation. Talks have been taking place for some time on cleaning the various rivers that run through or between the two Germanys, principally the Elbe and the Werra. Although negotiations on cleaning the Elbe remain stalled, officials in the Inner-German Affairs Ministry report progress may soon be made toward an agreement on desalinization of the Werra. Until recently, agreement has been blocked by a dispute in West Germany on how to apportion the costs among states bordering the river. This dispute reportedly has been resolved, and Bonn has informed East Berlin that it is at last ready to conclude an agreement. []

These apparent successes and additional intra-German meetings suggest that ecology is one topic on which the two Germanys will be able to compromise and cooperate in the months ahead. One reason for



Figure 2. West German Chancellor Kohl and East German leader Honecker meet at Soviet President Andropov's funeral. []

progress in this area is that most Germans have an abiding interest in the health of their forests. An equally important reason, however, is that environmental agreements at present carry extensive political benefits and only minimal costs for both sides. Nor do agreements in this area appear to nervous German-watchers in the East and West to threaten the loyalty of the two German states to their respective alliances—a benefit doubtless fully appreciated in both German capitals. []

An additional boost to prospects for agreement is the apparent West German willingness to assume most of the costs involved in such bilateral arrangements. Indeed, it is in agreements of this sort—plus payments for road repairs, sewage disposal for West Berlin, and the like—that Bonn seems most willing to make economic concessions to East Berlin. We do not expect this to change. Payments involved in the increased emigration from East Germany and in last November's postal agreement, in which Bonn agreed to increase its annual payments from DM85 million to DM200 million for "improved" services (meaning fewer delays and lost packages), typify a willingness to pay inflated sums for services rendered. []

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We believe the Kohl government almost certainly will continue to press for additional exchanges and broader human contacts, partly to ease the burdens imposed on separated friends and families but also to foster a sense of nationhood among younger Germans raised in a divided fatherland. We believe this policy explains Bonn's emphasis, during the recent loan negotiations, on reducing restrictions on travel to and from East Germany, and we expect the West Germans to continue to focus on the issue of exchanges. Particular areas of interest will be youth exchanges, sports contacts, a reduction in the minimum daily currency exchange required for all visitors to the East,⁶ and a lowering of the age at which East Germans are allowed to travel to the West. Bonn's willingness to grant additional payments—either through environmental, transit, or service agreements, or more directly in loans—may well revolve around East Berlin's willingness to move on these exchange issues, particularly on the currency issue. []

Observers should not expect a flood of East German concessions in response to deals like the credit guarantee. The Kohl government, in our judgment, does not view such deals as concessions but as gestures that signal political intentions. It should be remembered that West German banks and the government stand to profit from the loans made to East Germany: the interest rate is high—1 percentage point over the DM LIBOR rate—and on the most recent loan 0.25 percentage point will go to the government as a fee for the guarantee. In addition, the risk for Bonn is almost nonexistent, as East Berlin has pledged the funds from West Germany's annual transit payments as collateral. []

One complicating factor probably will be the legal application of agreements to West Berlin. The Kohl government received much criticism this summer when it became apparent in the days after the announcement of the second credit guarantee that some of the travel concessions granted by the East Germans

⁶ A few days after Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's coalition government was returned to office in October 1980, East Berlin increased—from DM13 to DM25—the amount of money West Germans and other Western visitors must exchange daily for East German currency. The rate for West Berliners was increased even more sharply—from DM6.50 to DM25. Also, East Berlin eliminated exemptions for children and pensioners but has since restored them. The intent of the increases was to limit travel while increasing revenues. []

would not apply to West Berliners. In view of this criticism and the election in West Berlin next March, we expect the Kohl government to give priority to obtaining equal benefits for West Berliners in future negotiations. This effort could in turn present an obstacle to achievement of some bilateral agreements. For example, negotiations on a cultural exchange agreement are being delayed because of differences over its application to West Berlin. []

Security Issues. Security issues are likely to play a greater role in future discussions. Both sides have justified improving intra-German relations at home and abroad by citing the need to reduce East-West tensions. For the East Germans, a discussion of missile deployments, arms control, and nuclear-weapons-free zones could both demonstrate their loyalty to Moscow and enable them to claim they are trying to weaken West Germany's link with NATO. []

We believe the Kohl government would prefer to avoid these topics of discussion so as not to raise suspicions in the West, but such avoidance may now be impossible. In hopes of encouraging Honecker to go through with his visit, Kohl publicly stated his government was prepared to discuss any issue, a remark the East Germans could use to argue for added focus on security issues at a future summit. The West German Government already may be moving toward a willingness to discuss these issues, believing that it will strengthen Honecker's hand in dealing with Moscow. And the Social Democrats almost certainly will press Kohl to discuss security issues. Bahr, for example, claimed in August that both Germanys must use the opportunity presented by a summit to promote a treaty for the renunciation of force between the two alliance systems and that topics like ecology are too superficial for such a momentous occasion. []

The Social Democrats already are discussing security issues with East German officials. In early July, for example, an SPD working group including Bahr and party foreign policy spokesmen Karsten Voigt and

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The Purchase of Political Prisoners and Emigres

Bonn's willingness to use its treasury to promote closer ties between the two Germanys is especially evident in the program to buy freedom for East Germans who are either political prisoners or have applied for exit visas. Prices and the number permitted to leave each year vary, but one press report noted that the average price is around DM50,000 per person. The asking price can go as high as DM180,000 in some cases—generally for highly trained professionals such as doctors.

Since 1963, approximately 20,000 East German prisoners have been ransomed for nearly DM2.8 billion, according to one press report. The average number of prisoners released annually is between 1,200 and 1,600. Emigres departing on grounds of family reunification—the primary justification for emigration—number roughly 5,200 a year.

Thus far, 1984 has seen a substantial number of officially sanctioned departures—over 33,000 as of July. Although Bonn does not have to pay for all emigres, we believe that the vast majority owe their freedom to Bonn's largess.

Hermann Scheer met in East Berlin with Politburo member Hermann Axen and others to discuss the establishment of a chemical-weapons-free zone. Axen traveled to Bonn on 20-21 September to continue the discussions with his SPD interlocutors, and further talks are scheduled for November. Both sides agreed to work for a European chemical-weapons-free zone as one step toward a global ban, and to focus their present efforts on verification means.

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One security issue being considered for discussion between the two governments is the nonuse of force. Genscher in particular has proposed such discussions as an appropriate "German" contribution to detente and arms control negotiations. Other possible topics include arms control, nuclear-free zones (Honecker publicly has embraced a variation of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme's proposal for a nuclear-free area in Central Europe), and other issues that could arise in the context of the Conference on Disarmament in Europe.

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The West German willingness to discuss such issues with East German officials reflects, we believe, a new sense that both states share what has been called a community of responsibility for peace in Europe. West Germans use this term loosely, but most apparently take it to mean a combination of efforts by both German states to reduce East-West tensions in Europe and to ensure that war does not come again to Germany. The Social Democrats, who seem to have taken the concept further, often speak of a "security partnership" with the East Germans. Again, they use the term loosely, but SPD actions suggest it refers to efforts by each German state within its respective alliance to promote arms control.

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Benefits and Dangers for NATO: A Policy Dilemma

The benefits to NATO of the Kohl government's intra-German policy are substantial, yet difficult to quantify. The Kohl government, in our opinion, is unquestionably pro-NATO and pro-United States. This leaves it open to domestic allegations of subservience, however, and its agreement to INF deployments

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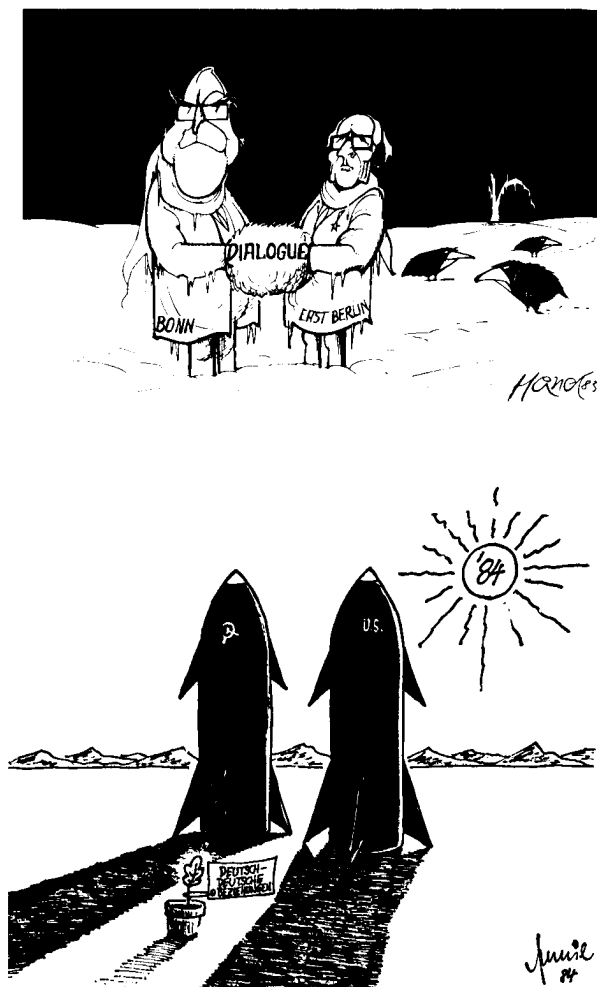


Figure 3. Editorial perspectives on intra-German relations.

last year damaged the longstanding domestic consensus on security policy between the parties of the governing coalition and the Social Democrats. We believe the Kohl government's active intra-German policy since then has strengthened West Germany's ties to NATO by demonstrating the government's credibility as a defender of "German interests." And the positive US response to this policy has helped the Kohl government to refute opposition suggestions that German national interests cannot be pursued within NATO. In short, the Kohl government's intra-German policy has helped to heal the breach in the West German postwar consensus on security issues caused by INF deployments—if only by deflecting attention from that breach.

The USSR has shown virtually no tact regarding Bonn's intra-German policy, and this—for now at least—also is to NATO's advantage. Loud Soviet-charges of renewed German revanchism and open repudiation of the notion of reunification have tarnished Moscow's image in West Germany. Not surprisingly, in view of the West German media's coverage of the Soviet allegations, most West Germans attribute the postponement of Honecker's visit to pressure from Moscow. This attitude has undercut those—especially in the SPD—who, to build opposition to INF and other NATO policies, have sought to portray NATO policies as the chief threat to German interests. In response, the Social Democrats have tried to limit damage to their political interests by blurring the responsibility for the postponement. When Honecker postponed his visit, Egon Bahr publicly attributed the decision to Soviet pressure but volunteered the view that "Washington didn't want the visit to take place either." Moreover, when Italian Foreign Minister Andreotti made statements on 14 September opposing German reunification, Horst Ehmke—rather than sharing Bonn's indignation—stated that Andreotti was only stating what others in the West believe.

The potential benefits to the West from the Kohl government's intra-German policy must be balanced against the possible dangers. We do not believe that West Germany is becoming so politically or economically dependent on pursuing relations with the East Germans that it would backslide on what it perceives to be an important Alliance commitment. For example, the Kohl government saw initial INF deployments as a fundamental test of West Germany's commitment to NATO and followed through despite Honecker's warning of an "ice age" in intra-German relations. However, Bonn's ever-increasing commitment to the intra-German relationship and the increased political costs of undermining it make questionable West German support for Alliance policies that Bonn perceives to be of marginal importance to Alliance security or for policies it perceives to be an

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impediment to improved intra-German relations. We believe the following are possible points of conflict between West Germany's NATO commitment and Bonn's intra-German policy:

- Because of potential sensitivities in the East to Bonn's pivotal position in the pursuit of forward defense, the Kohl government probably would reject doctrinal changes in NATO's flexible response strategy that would increase the likelihood of major counteroffensives across the intra-German border. For example, Bonn has been critical of some concepts included in Air Land Battle 2000.
- The West Germans are concerned about the way in which the targets of Allied nuclear forces are selected, and have raised with the French the issue of targeting East German territory. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- Most recently, the West Germans virulently opposed the "pipe bomb"⁷ concept, in part because of the symbolic effect of constructing any type of "obstacle" on the intra-German border. The suggestion was perhaps particularly inopportune at a time when the East Germans are continuing to remove the automatic shooting devices from their side of the border. [REDACTED]

Dangers also are inherent in any East-West German discussion of security issues. Although Bonn is unlikely to deviate knowingly from important NATO positions during such meetings, the mere fact of its willingness to discuss concepts such as the nonuse of

⁷ The "pipe bomb" idea was made public in August. It envisioned laying pipes that could be filled with explosive in strategic areas along the intra-German border. In the event of attack the explosive would be detonated, thereby creating a ditch to slow the advance of Warsaw Pact forces. [REDACTED]

force⁸ and nuclear-free zones could create the impression of Alliance disunity and increase the credibility in West Germany of concepts opposed by the Alliance. Moreover, discussions of such issues could raise public expectations in West Germany regarding the results of these talks. Domestic pressure, in turn, could influence Bonn's position in Alliance deliberations, particularly multilateral negotiations like those of CDE. [REDACTED]

The ongoing talks on chemical weapons between the SPD and East Germany's Socialist Unity Party illustrate these dangers. On 21 September, the two sides called on the Governments of East and West Germany to begin talks aimed at establishing a chemical-weapons-free zone in Europe as a step toward a global ban on chemical weapons. Chemical weapons are an extremely sensitive issue in West Germany, which has the only stockpile of US chemical weapons in Europe. Although the Kohl government will continue to stand behind NATO's position in favor of a verifiable global ban, it worries that publicity on this issue—which surprisingly has been avoided to date—could serve as a rallying point for the moribund peace movement. [REDACTED]

The Western Allies face a dilemma in reacting to Bonn's intra-German policy. The Kohl government believes it can continue to balance the pursuit of improved intra-German relations with West Germany's responsibilities in NATO. As a result, the West Germans are extremely sensitive to outside interference or criticism, especially from the West. Any such criticism almost certainly would be counterproductive. Not only would it fuel the leftists' argument that NATO does not serve German interests, but also it

⁸ We believe Bonn now is aware of US concerns about nonuse of force discussions outside the CDE forum. Foreign Ministry officials assured US officials that no specific proposal or joint German initiative was envisaged at the aborted summit, and, in a speech in August Genscher reiterated the NATO position that any discussions of nonuse of force must take into account the need for confidence-building measures. Nonetheless, we cannot discount the possibility that the Chancellor would endorse a nonuse-of-force proposal developed at a bilateral summit if he believed it necessary to support Honecker's new *Westpolitik* or to maintain the positive momentum of intra-German relations in the face of Soviet pressure. It is, moreover, the Foreign Ministry that appears to be most sensitive to US concerns, and communication between that office and the Chancellery often is inadequate. [REDACTED]

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West German Sensitivities on Intra-German Relations

The West Germans remain extremely sensitive to any indications that would confirm their suspicion that the United States and other Allies oppose closer intra-German relations. In the absence of official US criticisms of West German policy, they have reacted to US press reports and commentaries. For example, a Newsweek article concluded:

Germans expecting real progress on reunification will probably be cruelly disappointed. With memories of World War II still on their minds, the Soviets—and the NATO Allies—are not likely ever to let that happen.

A normally pro-American commentator in the highly respected Frankfurter Allgemeine responded to the article in an unusually emotional manner:

This is one of the most ignorant pieces American journalism has produced in the recent past. It can certainly compete in stupidity with the German media's anti-Americanism . . . But from the point of view of world policy, it is a dangerous supposition that, as *Newsweek* suggests, the West would unite with the East on this point. If anybody wants to rekindle unrelenting German nationalism, which has long ceased to exist, all he or she has to do is to continue to talk that way.

This sense of frustration—transformed into nationalism—also was expressed by government spokesman Peter Boenisch in an interview in early August:

Pravda accuses us of trying to undermine East Germany. *The Wall Street Journal* accuses us of not being hard enough vis-a-vis East Germany and of supporting the Communist regime. So what? There is only one answer: Let's continue the policy of reason. [redacted]

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The West Germans reacted angrily to the only official Western comment to date: remarks on 14 September by Italian Foreign Minister Andreotti that appeared to equate Bonn's intra-German policy with "pan-Germanism." The story immediately became the leading item in the West German media, and Genscher summoned the Italian Ambassador twice within 48 hours. Genscher reportedly accused Andreotti of dealing a "great insult" to Germans, a statement diplomatic circles in Bonn regarded as unprecedented in its coolness and bluntness toward an ally. Moreover, Kohl stated publicly that he did not consider the matter closed even after receiving a written apology from Italian Prime Minister Craxi. [redacted]

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probably would spark a nationalistic response among mainstream and conservative West Germans who traditionally have been the strongest advocates of NATO membership.⁹ [redacted]

At the same time, exaggerated support for Bonn's intra-German policy could give the Kohl government a false sense of security regarding Allied concerns,

⁹ We believe almost all West Germans are privately convinced that no one in the East or West wants German reunification. Leftists—whom polls show to be the least interested in reunification—are delighted by evidence supporting this view, and see it as helping to undermine support for NATO membership. Most West Germans, on the other hand, believe that the Federal Republic deserves to be trusted by its partners, and interference makes them feel betrayed and subservient. [redacted]

and create the impression among West German policymakers that Bonn has greater room for maneuver than it actually has in relations with the East. We believe that this overconfidence in turn would increase the chance of a reduction in Bonn's support for NATO initiatives it views as threatening to East-West or intra-German relations. For the time being, the Andreotti remarks on "Pan-Germanism," as well as several Western press articles, have kept Bonn sensitized to the need to deal with the problem of Western suspicions. [redacted]

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In any event, intra-German relations will remain a potential source of misunderstanding in West Germany's relations with its Western Allies. The country's sense of purpose regarding what it perceives as its eastern half and its new assertiveness in pursuit of what it sees as its national interests suggest that Bonn will be quite resentful of interference, especially by its Allies. While the West Germans will try to reconcile their Alliance responsibilities with intra-German ties, the attempt is likely to create some uncomfortable moments in Bonn and other capitals.

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